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THE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
FOUNDING OF MONTICELLO SEMINARY, AT  
GODFREY, ILLINOIS.

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This pioneer school for the higher education of women, the second in the State of Illinois, the Jacksonville Female Seminary being the first, was founded in 1838 through the generosity of Captain Benjamin Godfrey, who gave a site of fifteen acres and \$53,000 for the erection and equipment of buildings. This was a princely gift for those days and the new institution started with exceptional resources.

It met with immediate encouragement, for the pioneers of Illinois were ambitious for their daughters to have the opportunities which their isolation from the schools of the east and south seemed to deny them. The roll of pupils of Monticello contains the names of women of the foremost families of the State and the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the institution celebrated on June 3, 1913, was a gala occasion and a homecoming for the old Monticello girls from all parts of the country. Those who could not attend were asked to send written greetings and the reading of these letters was an interesting part of the exercises.

The life of Monticello may in some measure be divided into four periods. The first period being the very earliest history of the seminary under the principalship of Rev. Theron Baldwin from 1838 to 1843. The second, the period during which time Miss Philena Fobes was the principal. Miss Fobes was a teacher in the seminary from 1838, and upon the retirement of Dr. Baldwin, in 1843, she succeeded to the principalship. Miss Fobes was principal of the seminary from that time until 1866,

during which time the seminary made large strides and became one of the leading schools for the higher education of women in the west. At the recent celebration the ladies who were pupils under Miss Fobes were the guests of honor of the occasion. In 1867 Miss Harriet N. Haskell became principal and during her long directorship the institution held the high place it had acquired under the regime of Miss Fobes and made the advances necessary to keep pace with the times, adopting new methods of teaching and enlarging its equipment and resources. In November, 1889, the main building of the seminary was destroyed by fire and it was largely through Miss Haskell's efforts that the beautiful new buildings were erected.

Hundreds of women were educated at this seminary under the fostering care of Miss Haskell, and on the gala day they, of course, formed the greater part of the "home-comers." Miss Haskell labored for forty years for the seminary and on her death Miss Catherine Burrowes acted as temporary principal for two years declining an appointment as permanent principal. The present principal, Miss Martina C. Erickson, elected in 1910, is carrying on the labors and traditions of her predecessors and while with the greater competition of the present day her task becomes more arduous she is meeting with the success to which her talents and her labors entitle her.

Among the many interesting letters read at the anniversary meeting of June 3, 1913, was one from President E. J. James, of the University of Illinois, which we print in full as it contains much of interest to the students and friends of the seminary.

LETTER FROM EDMUND J. JAMES, PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, READ AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF MONTICELLO SEMINARY AT GODFREY, ILLINOIS, JUNE 3, 1913.

MADAM PRINCIPAL, TRUSTEES AND FACULTY OF MONTICELLO SEMINARY: I accepted with great pleasure the invitation of Miss Erickson to say a few words on this extremely interesting occasion in appreciation of the great work which Monticello Seminary has done for education in Illinois and throughout the Mississippi Valley.

I have not had the pleasure of personal acquaintance with many of the teachers or students of this institution. I have never had the opportunity of visiting it in person. But the name Monticello Seminary is connected with my earliest recollections of educational discussions in my family.

My grandfather on my mother's side, Dr. Anthony Wayne Casad, of Lebanon, Illinois, was instrumental in bringing Miss Lucy Larcom to St. Clair county to teach and was the county examiner to give her a teacher's license. His farm house, which he called "Hebron," was situated not far from the school where Miss Larcom taught. My mother, Amanda Keziah—what delicious names they gave girls in those days!—was a pupil of Lucy Larcom's in the days when she taught in Looking Glass Prairie, and I have often heard her speak of the deep interest and abiding affection which Miss Larcom as teacher created in her. She was ~~not~~ very much younger than Miss Larcom herself, but she had not had as good educational opportunities as Miss Larcom and therefore profited by this intimacy with her teacher, which was all the greater because of the comparatively slight difference in their ages. When Miss Larcom subsequently went to Monticello Seminary and then back to her eastern home, she maintained correspondence with my

mother for some years in which she described the life and work of the people among whom she was living.

Subsequently a closer personal tie bound me to Monticello, when my favorite cousin, Ellen J. Casad, one of the most lovely women this great State ever produced, who had formerly been a pupil at Monticello, graduating with class of 1865, became for a time a member of the teaching staff. She carried with her to the end of her life, which was cut short, alas, in its very flower, a deep interest in everything which concerned the welfare of the seminary, and from her distant home in California, she kept track of everything that was going on at Monticello as long as life and strength lasted. An aunt of mine, Narcissa Ann Casad, also graduated at Monticello Seminary with the class of '65 if I am correctly informed.

Very few people realize what a great debt of obligation this commonwealth owes to Captain Godfrey and the other people who were associated with him as supporters and workers in this task of founding and developing a school for young women in this pioneer country. I am not, at least in my own opinion, an extremely old man, but I was born in the year which saw the passage of the first effective public school law ever placed upon the statute books of Illinois—so recent was the real beginning of our free school education. Up to that time education had been largely in the hands of peripatetic teachers or strolling instructors or of private schools organized by individuals or churches or communities, or, alas, most commonly in no hands at all; for the facilities for elementary, secondary and higher education were sadly lacking during the first fifty years of the life of this commonwealth. Fifty years passed away after the admission of the State to the Union before the people of the commonwealth were willing to consider the establishment of a State university, and then they would not have done it, if it had not been that failure to do so would have lost a valuable

federal grant in the shape of public lands made for this purpose.

In the last twenty-five years the growth of the State university has been phenomenal, but greater and more important than even this has been the remarkable development of the free public high school system throughout the State, although even it has not yet kept pace with the growth of population. But little of this great development, so honorable and beneficial to the State, would have been possible if it had not been for the work done by these early institutions for the education of young men and young women, founded by public spirited citizens, by the energy of educational or religious missionaries, supported by the sacrifice and toil of generations of contributors in this and other states.

We are certainly under a lasting debt of obligation to all those men and women who of their large or small resources contributed in the early days to the upbuilding of the educational interests of this great commonwealth.

We can best show our gratitude to these early pioneers in education by dedicating ourselves anew to the work which they began. We can best show our appreciation of what Captain Godfrey and his associates did by helping to make a greater and better Monticello.

Some people seem to have an idea that because our public school system from the kindergarten to the university has been so fully developed, we no longer need the services of such institutions as this seminary. Not so. There never was a greater need of them. There never was a time when properly endowed institutions could do a greater service to the public than now, although it is naturally in some respects a different service from what it was in the thirties, forties, fifties and sixties of the last century.

I think the experience of modern nations for the last fifty years has demonstrated that no system of exclu-

sively state education and no system of exclusively private or church education can satisfy the multifarious needs of modern society. Both elements are needed; the one to supplement the other in order to have a well established system.

State education when in exclusive possession of the field tends to become mechanical and routine or else to be controlled by vagaries and the half-baked opinions of agitators and pseudo reformers; private education tends to crystallize into rigid forms redolent of antiquity, conservative of bad and good elements alike in the heritage of the past, unprogressive, unresponsive to the demands of the times, but when working side by side they stimulate and quicken each other, correcting the evils and strengthening the weaknesses especially incident to each.

The alumni and friends of this institution, therefore, in assisting it to a larger and better founded life will not only be aiding their alma mater as dutiful children should, but they will be rendering to public education itself a distinct service as every public spirited citizen should desire to do.

The University of Illinois extends to Monticello Seminary the most hearty congratulations upon its long and useful career and wishes for it an uninterrupted course of still greater prosperity and greater service to Illinois and the nation.